Doing Renewables Right

Using science-based management to make sustainable policy decisions

Defenders of Wildlife

Defenders Engagement in Renewable Energy Policy

- Who we are, what we do
- Washington, D.C. engagement
  - On the hill: Energy, Natural Resources and Appropriations
  - With the administration and the agencies
- Field Office engagement (AZ, NM, CO)
  - California and the RETI process
- In coalition …
- PEIS processes (Solar, Wind, Geothermal)
- Transmission policy
- WGA wildlife policy

Guiding Principles

- The threat of climate change and the unique value of public lands
- Balance the need to act swiftly with the need to get it right
- Social, ecological and economic benefits
- Retain options: Scale, ownership – there is more than one approach
- Do transmission right too
- Use science-based decision-making and public involvement to ensure good outcomes
- Learn from the oil and gas experience

Using science-based management to "get it right"

- Science-based decisions, along with robust public involvement, lead to legitimate, sustainable decisions
- Well-defined, measurable conservation objectives (habitat/population condition)
- Analytical tools are used to evaluate achievement of the objectives (modeling/monitoring)
- Consistent implementation of science-based analysis and decision-making over time

BLM policy direction to "get it right"

- Identify desired habitat/population **conditions** (Planning handbook)
- **Minimize likelihood** of listings (6840)
- Ensure **self-sustaining** populations (6500)
- **Monitor populations** of special status species to determine whether **objectives** are being met…consistent with principles of **adaptive management** (6840)

A policy model: HR 2807 America's Wildlife Heritage Act

- Establish **clear wildlife policy objectives** for USFS and BLM: Sustain fish and wildlife populations
- Establish **monitoring program to evaluate objectives**: A "coarse-fine" habitat/focal/at-risk approach feeds useful information into iterative decision-making processes
- Climate smart: Landscape scale planning and interagency cooperation
- Enhance cooperation between federal and state agencies

House Interior Approps Language

The Committee is concerned that a rapid expansion of renewable energy projects should be done with care…The BLM should provide the Committee a summary plan within 120 days that describes the policy, administrative and management-level actions that will be taken during the evaluation and approval processes for renewable energy development … to ensure: (1) that biological resources are assessed at appropriate scales; (2) and to ensure that fish, wildlife, and plant populations are sustained over the long-term through proper project location, mitigation, operational standards, and monitoring.

Scoping Questions

- How is BLM using existing policy tools to perform science-based planning and decision-making?
- What types of biological criteria, objectives and information were applied to study area decisions?
  - Assume that the application of information will increase as renewable siting policy matures?
- Are criteria/information being applied consistently across states?
  - The New Mexico decision
- Are existing RMPs robust enough to support science-based DM?
- How will BLM fill existing information needs over time?
- What steps are being taken to ensure transparency, public confidence and trust in BLM decision-making?